



# *In Touch South India*

Headlines from the U.S. Consulate General Chennai

May - June, 2005

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<http://chennai.usconsulate.gov>

## Get in Touch

### Main Web link:

<http://chennai.usconsulate.gov>

### Other links:

<http://americanlibrary.in.library.net>

<http://www.unitedstatesvisas.gov>

<http://www.usaep.org>

<http://buyusa.gov/india>

### Consulate Phone Number:

044-2811-2000

### Consulate Fax Number:

044-2811-2020



## **BACK TO SCHOOL!**



Looking back at our activities over just the past two months, you get the idea that we spend almost as much time at institutions of higher learning than we do here at the Consulate. Why, in March and April alone, we did nearly 40 different programs, in 30 different colleges and universities throughout southern India. In all, we directly connected with almost 10,000 students, faculty members and school administrators. 10,000!



Students start a school day at Janaseva Sisubhavan (JSSB), a rescue center for trafficked children, near Kochi, Kerala. In March, Public Affairs officers from throughout South Asia, as well as a large contingent from Washington DC, held their annual conference in Kochi. They spent one day in the community, doing several community service projects, including teaching at the Kerala Blind School, doing field work at the SOS Children's Village, working in the children's ward at Samaritan Hospital, and teaching and interacting with the children at JSSB.

## Upcoming Films:



May 6:

*Adam's Rib*

May 20:

*The Philadelphia Story*

June 3:

*The Magnificent Ambersons*

June 17:

*Captains Courageous*

June 20: *Bonnie and Clyde*\*

June 21: *Dirty Harry*\*

June 22: *Mean Streets*\*

June 23: *Rocky*\*

June 24: *The Godfather*\*

June 25: *Jaws*\* &

*Saturday Night Fever*\*

★1970's Film Festival

Co-sponsored by  
Madras Film Society

All films at Film  
Chamber Theater

All start at 6:30 PM *except*

June 25 double feature,  
which starts  
at 3:00 PM



Our consular officers regularly got out, talking with Indian students about the student visa process and studying abroad, visiting a number of cities (see article, next page) and meeting with many. Our AIRC made their usual outreach trips, enlightening over a thousand Indian students on the wide array of resources available here—resources that can be accessed in person or by mail. The Media and Press section oversaw a number of programs specifically designed for journalism students, here and in Hyderabad. USEFI continued to visit campuses, tirelessly promoting education. And, the PAS Program Section oversaw programs ranging from (to name but a few): Martin Luther King to "Why Art and Music Matter in Today's Society;" economic reform and liberalization to HIV/AIDS awareness; media trends to poetry; women's development initiatives to "supply chain management." And the list continues.

If, in the course of all these interactions with students, we are getting a glimpse of the future...then the future in south India looks very bright indeed.



Students in Kerala learning English from Mr. Michael Anderson Country Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Embassy

## U.S. CONSULATE SEND OFF



In late April, the entire Consulate staff got together to pose for a staff photograph in honor of Consul General Richard Haynes' departure. Had this picture been taken when the CG arrived at post, only three years ago, there would have been considerably less staff. And three years from now, who knows, at the rate things are going, we may need the entire page!

## CHENNAI CONSULAR SECTION PREPARES FOR STUDENT VISA SEASON

According to a recent report by the Institute for International Education, India sends more students to the U.S. than any other country. Studying a vast variety of subjects at a wide range of institutions, these students facilitate a vital educational and cultural exchange between the U.S. and India, and set the stage for future relationships in business, science, the arts, and more.

There are some helpful tips that those applying for a student visa should consider. According to Carol Cox, the Deputy Chief of the Nonimmigrant Visa Section, "prospective students hoping to apply for a visa this summer will need to prepare in advance. Review the application guidance on the U.S. Consulate -- Chennai website at <http://chennai.usconsulate.gov/www/nivfvisa.html>, as well as the State Department website at <http://travel.state.gov>. The application timeframe for students is generally tight because students can only apply ninety days before their enrollment date, and must be able to reach the U.S. before their classes start. As a result, once students secure an appointment for a visa interview with the consulate, they should make it count."

At their interview, suggests Cox, "prospective students should be able to explain to the satisfaction of the consular officer their chosen field of study and how they intend to use their education upon completion of their studies. Students should ask themselves whether they are educationally, professionally, and financially committed to acquiring a degree at a U.S. institution. That commitment will show through to the consular officer."

Assistant Secretary of State for Consular Affairs, Maura Harty, who oversees consular operations around the world, is frequently asked for her views on the importance that foreign students play in American education. She has strongly emphasized, "We don't want to lose even one international student."

--David Feldmann, In Touch Consular correspondent  
Feldmann can be reached at [chennaiintouch@state.gov](mailto:chennaiintouch@state.gov)

### Consular Facts

- American Consulate Chennai's Consular section issues approximately 300,000 consular receipts per year. This comes to 125,000 feet (38,100 meters) of Consular receipts!
- In March 2005, Chennai was the fourth busiest Consular section in the entire world!

## 'ACCESS' TO ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Chennai's Anjuman-e-Himayath-e-Islam was the only school in southern India (and one of three in all of India) selected for the launch of ACCESS, a two-year micro-scholarship program sponsored by the Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. PAS Chennai coordinates the program. The program is designed to provide significant English

language instruction to underprivileged high school students. At Anjuman, 60 students are divided into four classes—two each for 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students. The children are enthusiastic and eager learners, and since ACCESS commenced, in November 2004, have made great strides. The faculty, under the supervision of Dr. V. Saraswathi, the Secretary of the English Language Teachers' Association of India, has a combined century of English language teaching experience.



Students learning English at Chennai's Anjuman-e-Himayath-e-Islam school

On March 29, the program was officially inaugurated, and the students received framed certificates, signed by Ambassador Mulford. Many leaders of the local Muslim community turned out for the event, including Prince of Arcot Nawab Abdul Ali, and Anjuman President Mohammed Khalilullah, who both spoke at the ceremony. CG Richard Haynes presented an ESL collection of 85 books and audiocassettes. In his remarks, the CG reminded students of the importance of all languages, and encouraged them to continue in their pursuit of multiple languages. DPAO Christopher Wurst, who had previously sat in on some classes, praised the teachers' efforts, and remarked that the children were excited not only to learn English, but asked to "learn American." With that in mind, he and the boys practiced baseball terminology after the inauguration. In the shadow of the Anjuman mosque, on a beautiful Indian evening, you could hear 30 children shouting, "Swing-ana-Miss," "Stee-rike Three!", and "He's Out!"



Vice Consul for Public Affairs, Mr. Christopher Wurst and Cultural Affairs Specialist, Krishnakumari, as seen with students of ACCESS program.

## AIRC IN TOUCH WITH CAMPUSES NEAR AND FAR

*"The illiterate of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn."* –Alvin Tofler

Welcoming students here in the Consulate, or visiting campuses throughout south India, is nothing new for the AIRC staff. Blessed with a large collection and access to key databases, the AIRC is a sought-after research location for many university students and professors. A majority of the scholars you meet on local campuses have some connection with the AIRC, and for many it was a place where long hours of research for their thesis took place.

Recently, the staff of the AIRC organized three in-house orientation programs for history and English students from three city colleges, where more than 100 students attended. AIRC Chief of Special Services Meena Reddy welcomed the students and stressed the importance of AIRC material in preparing term papers and projects. Some students spent several hours browsing books and getting familiarized with the electronic databases. On March 28 and 29, 2005, Chennai IRC Reference Librarian L.R. Gowri reached out to more than 200 students and 25 teachers in the areas of Management, English, History, Economics, and Commerce at nearly 15 institutions in Coimbatore. She provided an orientation on the resources and services and explained the benefits of enrolling as members of the AIRC. She also called on some members of Coimbatore Productivity Council, Confederation of Indian Industries and journalists at The Hindu. Through this contact visit AIRC was able to reach out to target audience including

### AIRC Books relating to Education

Aaronsohn, Elizabeth. **The Exceptional Teacher: Transforming Traditional Teaching Through Thoughtful Practice** / Elizabeth Aaronsohn. San Francisco, CA.: Jossey-Bass, 2003 (370.71 AAR)

Bok, Derek Curtis. **Universities in the Marketplace: The Commercialization of Higher Education**/ Derek C. Bok. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003 (338.43378 BOK)

Hochschild, Jennifer. **The American Dream and the Public Schools** / Jennifer Hochschild. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2003 (371 HOC)

**The Principals and Practice of Educational Management**/ edited by Tony Bush and Les Bel.I. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2002 (371.2 PRI)

Stern, Sol. **Breaking Free: Public School Lessons and the Imperative of School Choice** / Sol Stern. San Francisco, CA.: Encounter Books, 2003 (379.111 STE)

younger audiences in an important educational and industrial city in south India. The visit helped retain and renew contacts with existing members and recruit new patrons to the AIRC and promote AIRC resources and services.

The AIRC also organized a series of programs to celebrate American National Library Week. The Open House at the AIRC attracted more than 400 patrons. AIRC staffers briefed newcomers, while more than 150 Indians (primarily high school students and teachers) viewed four films over a two-day span. Forty senior justices, lawyers, academics and students participated in a book discussion on "Justice as Fairness: a Restatement" by John Rawls at Tamil Nadu Dr.

## NEVER TOO YOUNG FOR THE AIRC



The AIRC's Meena Reddy shows off books of interest to children of Consulate staff members

Ambedkar Law University. AIRC took the opportunity to publicize the just-received new collections on computers and management. It was a great opportunity to engage high school students who visited in groups during the week. Students and teachers requested additional screening of some of the films. The program clarified misperceptions about AIRC access regulations and helped highlight its proactive services to South Indian audiences.

## CONSUL GENERAL RICHARD HAYNES' OUTGOING MESSAGE:

*Note: The following text appeared in several regional vernacular newspapers.*

In my three years here I have experienced the best of south India: food, dance, music, architecture and the warm people. Moreover, South India is already serving the world with its growing manufacturing, information technology, and pharmaceutical industries, but I am sure there is more to follow.

For our part, at the Consulate General of South India, we have almost doubled our staff in the past three years. We enlarged our visa interviewing facilities so that we have more service windows than any bus station in South India. Our Commercial, Center for Disease Control, Asian Environmental Partnership and U. S. Educational Foundation in India offices have been extremely active. Every workday, we process almost three planeloads of visas. Our visa section works three shifts a day and we have extended our hours to twelve hours a day. The demand is so great that we asked for even more officers and we hope our staff will increase significantly in the coming year.

Much remains to be done. India has ambitious infrastructure plans, but will need foreign investment to accomplish its goals. There is still too much waste of farmers' crops before the consumer can buy and enjoy them. Water shortages must be addressed, road safety improved. India will address these challenges, and should do so quickly to attract more investment. In the U. S., non-resident Indians are an increasingly large and influential part of our society. They already contribute far beyond their numbers, but I expect to see even more persons of Indian origin become prominent in our business, arts and government circles. This will have strong positive effect on our bilateral relationship.

The future is bright, and have enjoyed living here at such an exciting time.

Note: 'Seetha' is the Regional Officer for the United States Educational Foundation in India, better known as USEFI.

CW: Seetha, first tell me a bit about USEFI—its history and its mission.

RS: USEFI was established in 1950, under the Indo-US agreement on educational exchange. Both governments recognized USEFI as an organization created and established to facilitate the administration of the Fulbright program in India. USEFI's mission today encompasses not only the Fulbright program, but to foster educational and cultural exchange that promotes mutual understanding between the people of India and the people of the United States. Since 1950, USEFI has awarded nearly 7400 Fulbright fellowships to Indians and Americans, and also administered nearly 8250 fellowships.

CW: Can you explain the Fulbright program some more?

RS: Sure. The Fulbright program started with the vision of Senator William Fulbright, in 1946. The program aims to bring together people of different countries with people from the U.S., to promote mutual understanding. We have the American program, under the auspices of which we have visiting American scholars, students, researchers and artists. They visit India, affiliated with various institutions here, to carry out their work. Then there's the Indian program, where many Indian scholars and professionals, through open competition, travel to the U.S., affiliated with institutions there, to carry out their work. Fellowships in a number of areas of contemporary importance have been included. For example, conflict transformation, environment, teacher exchange at the school level and the partnerships for learning undergraduate studies. The work of these scholars, both during the fellowship and afterwards, positively impacts mutual understanding. USEFI also organizes programs around the expertise of Fulbright scholars that fosters dialogue between American and Indian scholars and their communities.

CW: What other services does USEFI offer that people might not be aware of?

RS: Besides the Fulbright and other fellowships for Indian and U.S. students, faculty and professionals, USEFI offers educational advising services around higher education in the U.S. We administer standardized tests and organize or participate in U.S. university and Indian career fairs. We offer an institutional membership plan, with a package of services, to U.S. universities. We also facilitate institutional linkages between American and Indian universities, promote short-term "Study India" programs for American students and organize

seminars, conferences, workshops and other programs that foster exchange. To know more about fellowships currently offered by USEFI or its services, please check at: [www.fulbright-india.org](http://www.fulbright-india.org)

CW: India leads the world in number of students studying in America. Why do you think this is?

RS: There are many reasons, including the choice of a variety of majors and specializations, flexibility in the educational system, merit-based admission, financial assistance, marketability of the degree, and the development that comes from the experience.

CW: What changes have you seen, over the past decade or so, as the amount of people studying in the U.S. has skyrocketed?

RS: An increased awareness of the options available, for one. Also, the number of individuals who are now able to contribute more to their home countries. Other countries are now actively competing to attract foreign students—this is a fairly new phenomenon. There are also more linkages and partnership programs between educational institutions, and finally, just simply more exchange—educational, cultural and economic.

CW: How do you alleviate the fears of prospective students, such as visa issues, being so far from home, etc.?

RS: We offer a number of services to help prospective students. We have a basic orientation and an open house on higher education once a week; it's free, and open to the public. We have a reference library exclusively on higher education in the U.S. that has directories, publications and software to guide the student through the application process of U.S. schools. We also offer specialized group advising sessions on the application package, student visas and pre-departure orientation. Visiting admission representatives, faculty and students from universities in the U.S. and consular officers interact with students, through our sessions, and enhance their understanding of higher education in the U.S. We also have individual advising for students.

CW: Wow. USEFI is very committed. Thank you so much for taking the time to describe your work.

RS: You're welcome. I definitely think that foreign study should be an option available to students. Experience in a different country often teaches an individual to respect differences, to understand people and ways of that country. It enhances their professional ability and above all, educates the individual to be a better human being.

